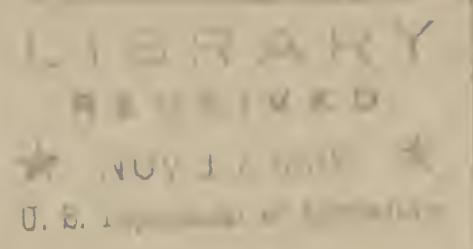


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THE GARDEN CALENDAR



A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Monday, November 3, 1936.

Hello folks. Nothing whets our appetites like a touch of cool weather, and when the mornings are frosty and the nights are cool and stimulating we naturally think more about food and good things to eat. And we are not alone in this desire for food for the animals, especially the wild life of our meadows and forests all seek more food when the weather gets cool. Many of these animals live on the fresh green growth that is killed by the first hard freeze and they are compelled to look for new sources of food. This is especially true of the rodents, including the meadow mice and the short-tailed piney woods mouse, and if you have any tender, juicy young fruit trees in your orchard or garden you had better get busy and clean all of the grass and litter away from their trunks.

According to Mr. James Silver of the Bureau of Biological Survey, meadow mice and pine mice are closely related but the meadow mouse is to be found over almost the whole of North America while the pine mouse is restricted to the eastern part of the United States. Both of these mice are blocky little animals with dark brown, coarse fur and almost concealed ears. The pine mouse is the smaller and darker in color of the two and has a shorter tail although both have short tails as compared with house mice. The meadow mouse works mostly above ground while the pine mouse works mostly just beneath the surface. The greatest damage to orchards occurs during cold winters and when there are heavy snows and at times when the regular food supply of these mice is cut off. The damage consists mainly of girdling of the lower trunks of the trees just at, or a trifle below the ground. For this reason it is desirable to remove all trash or grass from around the base of the trees.

The workers in the Bureau of Biological Survey have worked out very effective methods of poisoning these mice and you can get that information by writing for it, but in the meantime I want to warn all orchardists and you folks who have a few nice fruit trees about your homes to get busy and clean away around the base of the trees.

Wild cotton-tail rabbits are also very destructive, especially with young fruit trees. The rabbits seldom injure older trees but the mice have been known to kill whole orchards of mature, bearing trees. One way to protect the trunks of the trees from rabbits is to place a section of close-woven wire netting around the trunk of each tree. The wire should be placed about 3 inches below ground and 24 to 30 inches above ground. In sections where snows are heavy and where a heavy crust is liable to form on top of the snow it may be necessary to have the wire protectors extend

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higher than 30 inches. For further information about the protection of fruit trees from mice and rabbits, write to the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, or write to your own State Experiment Station. The main point is, don't delay measures to protect your trees for the damage may be done before you realize that there is any real danger.

About this time of the year I always get a number of letters requesting information on how to store celery and cabbage for winter use. In most cases the writers of these letters request an immediate reply and it is evident that they have put off writing until the last minute and they want the information in a hurry. I thought most everybody in the northern sections knew how to store cabbage in outdoor pits, but celery is a little more difficult to handle. Both celery and cabbage keep best when stored at a temperature well down toward freezing, in fact the actual freezing temperature of these products is about 2 degrees below the freezing temperature of water. A temperature around 33 degrees is all right for keeping them and in fact that is about the lowest safe temperature for keeping them in outdoor pits. The temperature of the average cellar is entirely too high for keeping celery and cabbage, too high in fact for the storage of such crops as beets, carrots and turnips and for that reason it is usually best to store them in outdoor pits.

Celery is the most difficult of all our garden vegetables to keep by ordinary storage methods. In our climate here around Washington I have found that I can keep it best in a trench about 18 inches in width and 15 inches in depth. The celery is lifted with most of its roots and some soil and is packed rather closely together in the trench. It is given a good watering and the trench left uncovered until the tops dry off then a covering of boards is placed over the trench but the ends of the trench left open for ventilation. As the weather becomes colder the boards are covered with straw and a layer of soil and finally the openings at the ends are closed by means of bags filled with leaves or fine straw. During periods of warm weather the celery must have a little ventilation but the nearer you can keep it to the actual freezing point the better it will keep. In very cold climates it may be necessary to place a heavy layer of straw over the trench to keep out frost. By using bags of leaves or straw to plug the end openings you can always get into the trench to get out celery for home use.